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GOOD OLD WAY
SOUGHT OUT & DEFENDED,

IN THE DISCUSSION OF SOME QUESTIONS,

BY THE

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THE Reverend and worthy Author of these short and scriptural discussions, is well known in the Church of Christ, and is a pleasing instance of the accomplishment of that delightful promise given as a divine cordial to the drooping spirits of aged saints, when heart and flesh faint and fail, Psal. xcii. 14. "they shall still bring forth fruit in old age."



THE GOOD OLD WAY

SOUGHT OUT AND DEFENDED.

QUESTION I.

IF it was, or is the duty of a nation or nations, to enter into a covenant of gratitude with God in Christ, grounded upon his covenant of grace? We answer in the affirmative; and for proof we quote, 1st, that passage recorded Psal. lxxvi. 11. "Vow and pay unto the Lord your God; let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared." "Vow and pay," *i. e.* take an oath of allegiance to him, and make conscience of keeping it. The covenant of grace in the substance of it, was published from mount Sinai, Exod. xx. 1, 2. "God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God." We cannot vow aright, unless we act faith upon the revelation he hath made of himself as the Lord our God. Let us vow to be his in consequence of his being the Lord our God.

2d. That passage recorded Psal. l. 5. "Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." These words are the words of God spoken unto the angels, who are to be ministers and ushers in this, as we read, Matth. xxiv. 31. God's saints are here described to be such as have made a covenant with him by sacrifice: Their covenant of duty and gratitude is grounded upon God's covenant of grace, made with Christ as the se-

cond Adam, and with the elect in him, as his seed. They have made a covenant with him by sacrifice, *i. e.* by exercising faith upon the person and atonement made by the blood of Christ, who was sacrificed for us. It is only by Christ, the great sacrifice, that we, poor sinners, can covenant with God, so as to be accepted of him, Eph. i. 6.

3d. That passage recorded Jer. vi. 16. "Thus saith the Lord, Ask for the old paths where is the good way, and walk therein." "Ask for the old paths," *i. e.* the paths prescribed by the written word of God, that true standard of antiquity. "Ask for the old paths," in order to find out "the good way," *i. e.* the way of the upright, and in which they have travelled in former ages, is "the good old way." "And walk therein," *i. e.* practise accordingly, keep close to the "good old way." Ask for the paths in which the godly travelled before you, in which David the king travelled, recorded in Psal. cxix. 106. "I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments," not according to the tenor of the covenant of works, but according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, and into which good old way Nehemiah the Tirshatha, and twenty-two priests, and seventeen Levites, and forty-four of the chief of the people as representatives of the congregation, entered and travelled. The names of these who set their hands and seals to this covenant, are mentioned verse 1. 27. and an account of those who signified their consent and concurrence, is recorded verse 28. 29. In the 29th verse, it is said they clave to their brethren, the nobles, and entered into a curse and into an oath, to walk in God's law, &c. As the nobles confirmed the covenant with their hands and seals, so the people with a curse and an oath, solemnly appealing to God concerning their sincerity, and imprecating his just revenge if they dealt deceitfully.

4th. That passage recorded Isa. xix. 18. "In that day," *i. e.* in the day of the Messiah, the gospel day, the New Testament day, "shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts: one shall be called the city of destruction." The language of Canaan is scripture language, and scripture language is language about Christ; the scriptures testify of him. Converting grace, by changing the hearts of men, changeth their language; "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." And "in that day, five

" cities in the land of Egypt shall swear to the Lord of hosts; and one shall be called the city of destruction:" *i. e.* every five cities in the land of Egypt shall, with a solemn oath, embrace the Christian religion; and the sixth city shall reject it, and so be called the city of destruction: For, as in Mark xvi. 16. " he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." In the 21st verse of that sixth chapter, it is said, " in that day the Lord shall be known to Egypt. and the Egyptians shall know the Lord; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it." And in that day, Micah says, chap. iv. 2. " Many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord," &c.

QUESTION II.

IF a covenant of duty or of gratitude, grounded upon God's covenant of grace, which a nation or nations in their ancestors, hath entered into with God in Christ, be binding upon posterity? or whether the national covenant of Scotland, and the solemn league and covenant of the three kingdoms be binding on us?

Unto this we answer in the affirmative, and in proof of the affirmative we quote Deut. xxix. 14, 15. To the children of Israel the Lord their God says, " Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath, but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with him that is not here with us this day," *i. e.* these that were detained at home either by sickness or necessary business, are included, and must not think themselves disengaged: No, every Israelite shares in the common blessings; they that tarry at home divide the spoil, and therefore every Israelite must own himself bound by the consent of the representative body. Religious national covenants in scripture, comprehend absent as well as present, and posterity to come as well as the covenanting forefathers. Now, our solemn covenants which our forefathers entered into, being a superadded and accumulative obligation, to what we were previously bound to by the word of God, they cannot but be binding on us their posterity.

2 We produce that passage recorded, Hosea xii. chap. and 4th verse. He, viz. Jacob, had power over the angel and

prevailed, he wept and made supplication unto him, he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us. The angel here is called God, viz. in the person of the Son, who found him in Bethel, the first time as he went to Padanarum, Gen. xxviii. 10. and a second time after his return, Gen. xxxv. 9. It is likely this refers to both, for in both God spake to Jacob; and the Prophet might very well say, "there he spake with us," who are the posterity of Jacob, for both times that God spake at Bethel, he spake with him concerning his posterity, Gen. xxviii. 14. "Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth," and Gen. xxxv. 12. "This land I will give to thy seed." Thus God covenanted with him and his seed after him.

3. We quote that passage recorded, Psalm lxvi. 6. "When Israel came out of Egypt," he, viz. God, "turned the sea into dry land before them;" and when they were to enter into Canaan, Jordan was divided before them, and they went through the flood on foot, "There did we rejoice in him," i. e. our ancestors did, and we in their loins. The joys of our ancestors were our joys, and we ought to look upon ourselves as sharers in them.

4. For the binding obligation of a covenant upon posterity, some quote, Prov. xxxi. 2. King Lemuel's mother said to him, "What my son, the son of my womb, and the son of my vows." Our children, that by baptism are dedicated to God, for whom, and in whose name, we covenanted with God, may well be called the children of our vows; and we may tell them so, and that it is at their peril if they break these bonds in sunder, which, in their infancy, they were solemnly brought up under. It hath been thought among presbyterians, that these vows were binding upon children.

5. The covenants binding upon posterity, may be evinced from Gen. i. 25. "Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel saying, God shall surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence;" compared with Exodus xiii. 19. "Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: For he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you." Joseph preferred a significant burial in Canaan, and that deferred too, almost two hundred years, before a magnificent one in Egypt. Moses considered the oaths of their ancestors, as binding on their posterity. And from this passage we in-

fer, that the religious oaths of our ancestors are binding on us their posterity; for, "though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it," &c. Gal. iii. 15.

6. The covenants binding upon posterity may be evinced, from Heb. vii. chap. 9 and 10 verses. "And as I may so say," *i. e.* I may say in some sense, "Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him," Where in general, observe 1st, A proposition. 2d, Observe the proof of the proposition. 1st, Observe a proposition laid down in these terms, "Levi also who receiveth tithes payed tithes in Abraham." Where more particularly observe, the subject of the proposition "Levi." Question. How is Levi to be taken here? We answer, Levi here is not to be taken personally for the person of Levi, for Levi himself was not a Priest, never received tithes of any. Levi here is to be taken collectively for the tribe of Levi. The whole tribe proceeding from him so far as they were interested in the priesthood; the priesthood being constituted long after his death, in the person of Aaron his grandchild, so then Levi who received tithes, is the same with the sons of Levi who received the priesthood; as in verse 5. of this 7th chap. 2. Observe the predicate of the proposition, "Levi paid tithes in Abraham," *i. e.* by the hands of Abraham, or in the person of Abraham. When Abraham himself gave tithes to Melchisedec, he gave not in his own name only, but also in the name of his whole posterity; and so in the names of the sons of Levi, who received the office of the priesthood, whereby was manifested the pre-eminence of the priesthood of Melchisedec above the priesthood of the sons of Levi.

2dly, Observe the proof of the proposition; "For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him." Question. Where lies the force of this proof? We answer, this proof depends upon a double principle, 1st, That Abraham's children were in Abraham's loins before they were ~~in him~~. This principle is clear from the light of nature. 2d, That God established his covenant with Abraham, and with his children in him. This principle is clear from the light of revelation, Gen. xvii. 7, 8. "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee," &c. compared with Psalm cv. 8, 9, 10. "He hath remembered his covenant," which covenant he

made with Abraham, &c. From these two principles, that Levi was in the loins of Abraham, not only in respect of natural generation, but also in respect of a covenant transaction, between God and Abraham; wherefore what Abraham as the representative did, his children the represented did in him.

In the application of these verses, we may answer 1st, An objection. 2d, Mark the illustration of the covenants. 1st. Of works. 2d. Of grace. 3d. Of duty. The objection is; Was not Christ himself in the loins of Abraham, as well as Levi was, and so payed tithes in Abraham as Levi? We answer, The Lord Jesus Christ was not in the loins of Abraham as Levi was; Christ was not in the loins of Abraham as to his Divine Person, but as to his human nature; and not as to his human nature by ordinary generation, but by extraordinary generation, Luke i. 35. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee," &c. And not being in the loins of Abraham by ordinary generation, he was free from Adam's sin, and from paying tithes. Christ was the person represented by Melchisedec, to whom the tithes were paid, and in whom Melchisedec was blessed, and in whom Abraham was blessed, for in him all nations of the earth shall be blessed.

2dly, We mark the illustration of the covenants, 1st. By this argument, of persons doing things in the loins of their predecessors: We have an illustration of the covenant of works, which being made with Adam, not only for himself but for all his posterity. When he brake the covenant, they all brake it in him; we all sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression. We were in Adam's loins when he sinned, and that guilt which was contracted by the human nature, as it was in the person of Adam, is derived to the same nature, as it is in the person of all other men descending from him, by ordinary generation, Rom. v. 12. The guilt of Adam's first sin cleaves to the human nature for ever, or it must be taken away by an act of grace.

2d. By this argument of persons doing things in the loins of their predecessors, we have an illustration of the covenant of grace, which being made with Christ as the second Adam, and with the elect or believers in him, as his seed. When he fulfilled the broken covenant of works, believers fulfilled it in him; when he obeyed the precepts, they obeyed in him, Rom. v. 19. when he endured the penalty, they

endured it in him, Gal. ii. 20. "When he rose from the dead, they rose in him; now he sits at the right hand of God, in the heavenly places, and they sit in him," Eph. ii. 6. There is certainly nothing of more importance to us, than to know which of these two covenants we belong unto; whether that of works, or of grace; for as in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive.

3d. By this argument of persons, doing things in the loins of their predecessors, we have an illustration of a covenant of duty, which is a covenant of gratitude, in which covenants of duty our forefathers for themselves, and their posterity, did avouch the Lord to be their God, and did engage and swear, against Popery and Prelacy, and every thing contrary to the word of God, and to the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the reformed church of Scotland. The binding obligation of these covenants we have formerly evinced, from several passages of scripture, unto which we shall here subjoin that passage, recorded in 2 Sam. xxi. chap. 2, 1. where we find the oath, that the children of Israel had sworn, for the safety of the Gibeonites, in the days of Joshua, binding on them in the days of David; and for Saul's breach of it, a famine of three years was inflicted, and seven of his sons hanged. These covenants our forefathers entered into, being nothing but a superadded obligation, to what we were previously bound, by the word of God, cannot but be binding on us their posterity. We were in their loins, when they entered into these covenants, as Levi paid tithes in his fathers loins, so we in our fathers loins, swore these covenants, the national covenant, and the solemn league and covenant; and so are binding on us.

4th. We may enquire, whether the civil magistrate is under a moral obligation to support the true religion? Or, in the terms of the Confession of Faith, chap. xxiii. paragraph 3. "Is it the duty of the civil magistrate to take order, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all the ordinances of God duly administered?" &c.

Unto this question we answer in the affirmative, and for the confirmation of the answer, 1st, We cite Deut. xvii. 18, 19, 20. "When he," viz. the king, "sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, he shall write him a copy of this law," i. e. the law of God, "and he shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes,

"to do them." His writing and reading were all nothing, if he did not reduce to practice what he wrote and read.

2d, We cite Isaiah xlix. 23. There the Lord says to the church, "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers." Kings are nursing fathers and their queens are nursing mothers to the church of Christ, by making laws for the maintenance of the church of Christ. Constantine the Emperor, in the beginning of the fourth century, was a nursing father; and his mother, Helena, an English woman, was a nursing mother to the church of Christ. Alfred the king of England, in the ninth century, was a nursing father and his queen was a nursing mother to the church. King Alfred's forces being defeated by the Danes, he retired to a small castle; and when there, a beggar requested alms, the queen informed the king, that they had but a small loaf remaining: The king replied, Give the poor Christian the half; he who fed five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, can make the half suffice for more than our necessities. Accordingly this poor man was relieved, and the king's act of charity soon recompensed.

3d, For the confirmation of the answer, we cite Ezra vii. chap. from the 11. verse to the 26. We have the copy of the letter that king Artaxerxes gave to Ezra the priest; verse 1st, The king said, "I make a decree," verse 23. "that whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be done diligently for the house of the God of heaven;" and verse 26. that "whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgement be executed upon him speedily," &c. for which singular mercy Ezra, in verse 27. "blessed the Lord God of his fathers, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, who hath put such a thing as this into the king's heart to beautify the house of the Lord in Jerusalem," If any good appear to be in our heart, or in the heart of others, we must own it was God that put it there, and bless him for it; for it is he that worketh in us, both to will and to do that which is good.

4th. For the confirmation of the answer, we quote 2 Chron. xiv. chap. verse 1. "Abijah slept with his fathers, and Aza his son reigned in his stead." Verse 2. "Aza did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God," particularly in abolishing idolatry, for verse 3. "he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high

"places; and brake down the images and cut down the groves." Verse 4. He "commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment." Verse 11. "He cried unto the Lord his God for help, saying, O Lord our God, help us against," viz. a formidable army of Ethiopians, that envaded them; and the Lord smote the Ethiopians, &c. chap. xv. 9. "He gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them," &c. Verse 12. "They entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers, with all their heart." Verse 14. "they swore unto the Lord with a loud voice." Verse 16. The queen, mother of Aza, he deposed for idolatry, and her idol he destroyed. All these deeds of the king were good and right in the eyes of the Lord. The king aimed at praising the Lord his God in these actions. Happy they that walk by this rule, not doing that which is right in their own eyes, or in the eyes of the world, but what is so in God's eyes.

5th. For the confirmation of this third paragraph of the xxiii. chap. of the Confession of Faith, we quote 2 Chron. xvii. chap. verse 1. It is said "Jehosaphat his son," *i. e.* the son of Aza, "reigned in his stead." In the 3d and 4th. verses we have his personal piety; "The Lord was with Jehosaphat, because he walked in the first ways of David his father, and sought not into Baalim; but sought unto the Lord God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel." In verses 6, 7, 8, and 9. we have the course he took to promote religion in his kingdom; "he took away the high places and groves out of Judah. Also in the third year of his reign, he sent to his princes, to five of them, to teach in the cities of Judah; and with them he sent nine Levites, and with them two priests; and they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the cities, and taught the people." It is said they "had the book of the law of the Lord with them," that from thence they might fetch all the instructions they gave to the people, and not teach for doctrines the commandments of men. Itinerant preachers and ordained pastors, when they go to teach the people, should have their Bible, the book of God which he hath wrote about himself with him.

6th. For the farther confirmation of the answer, we cite

2 Kings xviii. 3, 4. "Hezekiah, king of Judah, did that which was right in the sight of the Lord; he removed the high places and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made; for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it, and he called it Nehushtan," i. e. a piece of brass. This serpent, howsoever, formerly used by God's command, as a sign of grace, being now abused to idolatry, he, the king, broke it to pieces, i. e. as bishop Patrick expounds it, ground it to powder, which he scattered in the air, that no fragments of it might remain. Good things, when idolized, are better parted with than kept; "Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?"

7th. For the foresaid purpose, we quote 2 Chron. xxxiv. 2. "Josiah the king did that which was right in the sight of the Lord;" and consequently he did right in gathering together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem, verse 29. He did right in reading the book of the law of the Lord in the ears of the priests and the Levites, and all the people, verse 30. He did right in making a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord and to keep his commandments, verse 31. He did right in setting the priests in their charges, and in encouraging the service of the house of the Lord, and in exhorting the Levites to discharge their office "Serve now the Lord your God, and his people Israel," Chap. xxxv. 2, 3. If ministers are remiss and indifferent, it is not amiss for any, but most proper for magistrates, to stir them up to their business: Col. iv. 17. "Say to Archippus, Take heed to thy ministry."

In the last clause of that paragraph, it is said, "For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them, be according to the mind of God."

For the proof of this last clause, the Assembly quotes 2 Chron. xix. 8, 9, 10. and 11 verses. "Moreover, in Jerusalem did Jehoshaphat set of the priests, and of the Levites, and of the chief of the fathers of Israel, for the judgment of the Lord, and for controversies: And he charged them, saying, Thus shall ye do in the fear of the Lord faithfully, and with a perfect heart." Whether these persons made up one court, named the Sanhedrim; or there were two distinct courts, the one ecclesiastical, con-

list of priests and Levites: the other civil, consisting of the chief of the fathers of Israel. The ecclesiastical for the judgment of the Lord, *i. e.* for sacred matters concerning the laws, the worship and service of God. The civil, for controversies, *i. e.* for matters of difference, either betwixt the king and his subjects, or betwixt subject and subject. This interpretation is grounded upon the 11th verse; "Behold Amariah the chief priest, is over you, in all matters of the Lord, and Zebadiah, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters." In the 9th verse, he charged them, saying, "Thus shall ye do in the fear of the Lord, faithfully, and with a perfect heart," *q. d.* pass such sentences in your respective courts, as your consciences, upon hearing the parties, shall judge to be just, and not acting against your consciences for carnal motives, as corrupt judges do.

Further, For the proof of this last clause, the Assembly cites 2 Chron. chap. xxix. 3d verse: "Hezekiah the king, in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and repaired them." The first thing he did, was to open the doors of the house of the Lord, which Ahaz, his father, had shut up, 2 Chron. xxviii. xxiv. Verse 4. He brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the east street, which east street was before the eastern gate of the temple. Verse 5. He said unto them, "Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place," *q. d.* carry forth that filthy altar, which Ahaz had put in the place of God's altar, 2 Kings xvi. 11. and the idols or other polluting things which were there. We do not find the priests and the Levites addressing themselves to him, for the restoring of the temple service, but he called upon them. He did not make it his first business to revive the civil interests of his kingdom, but to restore religion to its good posture again; to its former purity, as in the days of David. Those that begin with God, begin at the right end of their work, and it will prosper accordingly.

Moreover, for the proof of this last clause, the Assembly quote Matth. ii. 4, 5. "When Herod the king had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born; and they said unto him, in Bethlehem of Judah; for thus

"it is written by the prophet," viz. Micah, chap. v. 2. The chief priests were teachers by office, and the scribes made it their business to study the law; and Herod, that he might be the better satisfied, calleth a synod, conveneth all the chief priests and scribes, and demanded of them what was the place, according to the prophecies and writings of the Old Testament, where Christ was to be born? This good question was put by Herod with an ill design.

From what hath been said, we infer, that the Christian magistrate cannot, nor ought to be excluded, from all care about religion or sacred things. This may be evinced from the Divine mandate, Deut. xvii. 18. "It shall be when he," viz. the king, "sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests the Levites." This mandate was repeated to Joshua, chap. i. 8. And at the coronation of Joash, Jehoidah gave him the testimony, 2 Kings xi. 12.

2d. From Divine promises, such as that, Isa. lx. 10. "The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee. Yea," Psal. lxxii. 11. "kings shall fall down before him, and all nations shall serve him."

3d. This may be evinced from the titles given in scripture to magistrates: they are called Gods, Psal. lxxxii. 6. because they bear the character of God's power; and they ought so to carry as to be his vicegerents, by promoting his glory above all things.

They are called Shepherds, Isa. xlv. 28. In that place, of Cyrus, the Lord says, "He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, 'Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, 'Thy foundation shall be laid.'" Christian magistrates may be called shepherds, not only because they feed the belly, but chiefly because they ought to be solicitous about the salvation of their subjects, by taking care that their subjects be brought to the saving pasture of God's word. They are called Fathers, 1 Sam. xxiv. 11. because they ought to be tender and to have a care of their subjects, as fathers of their children.

Here an enquiry must be made, If there be any spiritual power competent to the church, distinct from political power; and what is the nature of that power?

That spiritual power is competent to the church, distinct

from the political power of the State, appears, 1st, From the keys of the kingdom of heaven being given, not to the magistrates of the State, but to the ministers, the pastors of the church, viz. the power of shutting and opening heaven; of binding and loosing sinners; of retaining and remitting sins: Matth. xviii. 18. "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." John xx. 23. "He saith unto them," viz. the disciples, "Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Although the use of the keys may be extended to the preaching of the word, yet it is not to be limited to this, but to be extended also to the discipline which Christ hath instituted in his church, and which ought not to be exercised by each pastor singly, but conjunctly, by the whole presbytery or synod.

From the titles of the pastors of the church, which denote this power, as elders that rule well, 1 Tim. v. 17. as fathers over you, and admonish you, 1 Thess. v. 12. as bishops, parochial bishops, Phil. i. 1. as stewards of the mysteries of God &c. of the sacraments, 1 Cor. iv. 1. all which titles include some power and authority pastors have over the people committed to their charge; and this power the Lord gives them for edification, not for destruction, 2 Cor. x. and 8. 2 Cor. xiii. and 10.

3d. Church power differs from State power as to origin. State power is from God the Creator, the supreme ruler of the world; but church power is from Christ the Mediator, the supreme head of the church. The ministers of the church are sent by Christ, and act in his name, John xx. 21. "As my Father sent me, so send I you."

4th. Church power differs from State power, as to the possessor of it. State power can be possessed by Heathens, by strangers from the covenant of grace; but not church powers that may be exercised by a woman, but not church power, 1 Tim. ii. 12.

5th. Political power imports dominion, Luke xxii. 25. "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them." Magistrates have a power to make laws for governing their kingdoms; and when necessity requires, a power of altering them, but church power doth not import dominion, 2 Cor. i. 24. "Not that we have dominion over your faith." Church power is only ministerial. Bishops are not lords but ministers,

1 Cor. ix. 1. they cannot make laws to the church. Christ is the one law-giver, James iv. 12. whose laws cannot be changed by his ministers. Their duty is to explain and apply his laws.

6th Church power is not exercised by carnal weapons; as guns, pistols and swords of steel; but by spiritual weapons; as the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 2 Cor. x. 4. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God."

Caution. Although the magistrate's and church power be distinct, yet the magistrate's power *circa sacra*, doth not, and ought not to abrogate church power; because, although they may sometimes be conversant about the same thing, materially considered, yet it is not the same thing formally viewed. The magistrate's power is external, respecting only the outward man; but the pastor's power is internal, respecting the inner man, the conscience; that power is corporeal; this power is spiritual; the word of God, accompanied with the almighty power of the Spirit of God, pulls down the strong holds of the devil, in the hearts of men, and brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

We would now clear up two or three articles in the Confession of Faith, which to some are dark and doubtful. The first we mention is part of the 4th article of chap. xxiii. which is laid down in these terms, "infidelity or difference in religion doth not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to them."

1st. This article is grounded upon 1 Pet. ii. 13. where we are commanded to submit ourselves to every ordinance of man, namely in all that is commanded us, if not contrary to God and his command; otherwise, according to Acts vi. 19. "it is better to obey God than man." And it is said, "for the Lord's sake," i. e. because it is God's will to govern us by them.

2d. This article is founded upon, Rom. xiii. 1. where Christians that were at Rome, are commanded by the apostle to subject themselves to the higher powers; and that without exception; and even to that Heathen the Roman emperor. (3.) This article is confirmed by Acts xxv. 10, 11. where, when Paul was pursued for his life, and charged with matters criminal, he appealed unto Cesar. (4.) This

article is proven by Matth. xxii. 21. there Christ says, "Render unto Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Christ himself payed tribute to Cesar, though he was free; being both the Son of God by nature, and the son of David by birth.

Another article we mention, is the 2d. article of the 31st. chapter of the Confession of Faith, which is laid down in these terms: 'As magistrates may lawfully call a synod of ministers and other fit persons, to consult and advise with, about matters of religion, so if magistrates be open enemies to the church, the ministers of Christ of themselves, by virtue of their office; or they, with other fit persons, upon delegation from their churches, may meet together in such assemblies.' In the act of the assembly at Edinburgh, August 27, 1647. approving the Confession of Faith, it is declared, that the Assembly understandeth some parts of the 2d article of the thirty-first chapter, only of kirks not settled or constituted in point of government; and that in such kirks, a synod of ministers and other fit persons may be called by the magistrates authority and nomination, without any other call, to consult and advise with, about matters of religion. And if it shall happen, that both church and state judicatures shall make an universal defection from the purity of doctrine and worship, received and acknowledged, it is the duty of a godly king, by virtue of his regal power and authority, to set about a work of reformation, and to call and demand all ranks of people, to return to the true worship and service of God, 2 Chron. xxix. 4. 2 Kings xxiii. from the 2d. to the 36th. verse. And after the example of these godly kings, Constantine, the first Christian emperor, did convocate the first Nicene council. Theodosius the elder did call the first council of Constantinople, and Theodosius the younger, did call the first council of Ephesus.

In the year 1643, the church of Christ, in this island, being in a broken state, the Lords and Commons of England did call an assembly of learned, godly, and judicious divines, to meet at Westminster; and each member of that assembly did vow, in the presence of God, to maintain nothing in point of doctrine, but what he believed to be most agreeable to the word of God; nor, in point of discipline, but what may make most for God's glory, and the peace and good of this church. When that assembly was sitting at Westminster, the General Assembly of the church of Scotland, did

send some godly and learned of this kirk to the kingdom of England, to propose, consult, treat and conclude with that assembly, in all matters which may further the union of this island, in one form of kirk government, one Confession of faith, one catechism, and one directory for the public worship of God. Accordingly we are in possession of that form of Presbyterial church government, and form of ordination of ministers, agreed upon by that assembly; in possession of that directory for the public worship of God; we are in possession of that Confession of faith, agreed upon by that assembly; and we are in possession of the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, agreed upon by that assembly: all and each of these things were agreed upon as parts of the Covenanted uniformity in religion, betwixt the churches of Christ in the three kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland.

We conclude with that exhortation, recorded in Psal. cvii. 1. "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever." The Lord is good in giving us gospel ministers and Christian magistrates. The one cannot say to the other, I have no need of you, for God's Israel have need of both. Blessed be God for gospel ministers and Christian magistrates. What a great deal of good may, and with the blessing of God, will be done when princes with their power, and gospel ministers with their scripture learning, agree to teach the people the knowledge of God and their duty. In Exod. xvii. chapter, from the 3th verse to the close, we read how church and State united against Amalek. For setting this passage in its true light, we make the following remarks:

Remark 1st, While the Israelites were in the valley with Joshua, their general, Moses, was on the top of the hill with the rod of God in his hand, which he held up as a banner to encourage the Israelites in the battle with Amalek; and which he held up by way of appeal to God, the battle being the Lord's battle.

Remark 2d, Moses was king in Jeshurun, as we read in Deut. xxxiii. 5. Aaron was the priest of the Lord, and Hur was a prince of the tribe of Judah.

Remark 3d, When Moses hands became heavy and ready to fall down, Aaron and Hur being with him, they took a stone and he sat upon it, and they stayed up his hands, the one upon the one hand, and the other upon the other

hand, until the going down of the sun; and until Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. Indeed, in John xviii. 36. Jesus says, "My kingdom is not of this world:" But in Rev. xi. 15. we read, "The seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." Under the sounding of the seventh trumpet by the seventh angel, the last and the most glorious æra of the church upon earth, shall take place, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ," *i. e.* say some, kingdoms in their civil and political character, do enter, and are received into the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. Or, as others say, such nations as formerly did not acknowledge the only living and true God, shall now be converted and submit to him. They are said to become the Lord's and his Christ's; they were his by creation, but were not of his church, nor did acknowledge his Christ as head. Now they become the Lord's by special interest, acknowledging him as their Lord, and they become his, Christ's, by the profession of faith in him, as the mediator between God and them, and he shall reign for ever. Even under Antichrist's height of tyranny, Christ had a kingdom; but this reigning relateth to his reigning visibly in the world, without such an universal eclipse by Antichrist, or by any other: Of "His kingdom there shall be no end." And for this, "Twenty-four elders give thanks, saying, (as in verse 17.) "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art and wast, and art to come, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power and hast reigned. Now unto him be glory in the church by Jesus Christ, throughout all ages, world without end." *Amen.*

APPENDIX.

THE authority of the Old Testament holds now as well as then in all things; except in the ceremonial law, and

some precepts in the judicial law, both which laws had their accomplishment in Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. In John v. 39. Jesus says, "search the scriptures;" *i. e.* the Old Testament scriptures; "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and "they are they which testify of me." And so what arguments are drawn from these scriptures, for the binding obligation of our covenants, are as divine as these drawn from the New Testament, from which we may for that purpose quote,

1. That passage recorded in Matth. v. 33. There Jesus says, "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old "time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shall perform unto the Lord thine oath." Moses in Numb. xxx. chap. and 2d. verse says "If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear "an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his "word." He shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth, which may be meant of these promises, to which God is a party. Vows made to God must be punctually paid, Eccl. v. 4. "When thou vowest a vow unto the Lord, "defer not to pay it," &c.

2. For that purpose some cite that passage recorded, 2 Cor. viii. 5. They viz. the churches of Macedonia, "first "gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us," viz. Paul and Timothy, "by the will of God." This good work, these churches performed in a right method: First, They, in a covenant of gratitude, gave themselves to the Lord; and then they gave unto us their contribution, to be disposed of by the will of God. They solemnly, jointly, and unanimously, made a fresh surrender of themselves, and all they had, unto the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. For that purpose we quote, Gal. iii. 15. "Brethren, I "speak after the manner of men, though it be but a man's "covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or "addeth thereunto," *q. d.* though a covenant be made only between man and man, yet if it be confirmed by oath, or other usual ways of confirmation, neither of the parties can justly make that covenant void, nor add any clause thereunto, destructive of the former. So our covenants of duty with God, being confirmed by our oath, cannot be disannulled by us without perjury; which is a sin condemned by the light of nature, as a complication of impiety towards God.

4. Devoting ourselves to the Lord in a covenant of duty,

is a solemn part of religious worship, enjoined to us in the first and third commandments of the moral law; and so not a thing indifferent to do or not to do it at our pleasure: In Eccl. v. 4. the Lord, by Solomon, speaks by a precept, and by a direction, saying, "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it." Perform it while the sense of thine obligation is fresh, and strong upon thee, lest delays end in denials, or in a resolution of non-performance. And plead the promise made to the Egyptians, Isa. xix. 21. "The Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it."

In Jer. iv. 2. the Lord by that prophet speaks by a precept and by a promise, saying, "Thou shalt swear the Lord liveth, in truth, in judgement, and in righteousness. And the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory." Before their conversion, their idols were their trust and their glory, but when turned from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God, "they glory only in the Lord," 1 Cor. i. 28, 29, 30, 31.

In Isaiah xlv. 23. The Lord speaking by a promise, and by an oath says, for the comfort of all that by faith look to the Saviour, "I have sworn by myself, and God can swear by no greater," Heb. vi. 13. "The word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return," viz. unto me void, or without effect; as in Isa. lv. 11. that "unto me every knee shall bow," in humble adorations and addresses, in a cheerful obedience to his commands, submission to his disposals, and compliance with his will in both. And unto me, he says "shall every tongue swear." i. e. they shall bind themselves by an oath of allegiance unto him. "Unto me shall every tongue swear," the kingdoms of this world, shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. We may conclude this paragraph with the dying words of Mr. Guthrie to the people, when he was upon the scaffold; after the cloth was upon his face, he slipped it up again, and with a loud voice cried to the people, The covenants the covenants, shall be Scotland's reviving.

Exhortation as in Psalm lxii. 8. "Trust in him" i. e. in God, "at all times, ye people pour out your heart before him:" Trust in God's promises and pour out your hearts for the performing of them. Trust in the Lord and pray for his performing that promise Isa. xlv. 3. "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring."

Verse 4 "They shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses," *i. e.* the seed and offspring of the church, shall spring up and grow as fast "as willows by the water courses," Verse 5. "One shall say I am the Lord's;" *i. e.* they shall say it one, by one every one for himself, shall say, I am his only, his wholly, and his forever, "Another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." This implies that ye have given up with your own name, and all your self-righteousness and self-confidence, and that ye have given up your name, to be swallowed up in the name of Christ, who is God's Israel, in whom he will be glorified. As personal, so national covenanting is promised, Zech. ii. chap. and 11th. verse. "Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people." In the day of the Lord's pouring out his Spirit, many nations shall be joined to the Lord, viz. by his Spirit. The Lord and the nations shall be one Spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17. "And shall be God's people," *i. e.* shall be God's covenant people, as dear to God as ever Israel had been. This promise had its begun accomplishment in Scottish, English, and Irish nations, in their surrendering themselves to the Lord, and swearing allegiance to Zion's King, in our covenants national and solemn league. O let us pray for a more extensive accomplishment of this promise, that many heathen nations may be joined to the Lord.

Magistracy is either a curse or a blessing, if it belong to the execution of the threatening, of the covenant of works, 'tis a curse, but if it be the performing of a promise, of the covenant of grace, 'tis a blessing. Perhaps it may not be out of purpose, to enquire in what sense Christ died for all? In answer, divines distinguish betwixt the sufficiency, and efficiency of his death; with regard to the first, it is sufficient, for the redemption of every man; with regard to the efficacy of his death, as every man is benefited by the death of Christ, so far Christ died for him, but these benefits are not of one kind, some are common to every man, all the earthly blessings which unbelievers enjoy, are the fruits of his death; being the fulfillment of that promise, Gen. viii. 22. Other benefits belong to the members of the visible church, and are common to all those who live under the gospel; in any gifts such may receive from Christ, which, thro' their own fault, are not saving; other benefits are saving, such as true

faith, justification, adoption, and sanctification, &c. In this sense he, according to his Father's will, and his own intention, only for the elect, his sheep, to bring them effectually to grace and glory. So far as men are benefited by Christ, so far Christ died for them. So far as rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil, they are fruits of Christ's death, by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice. The Father of glory hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things, to the church which is his body, he hath on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written, "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

Some more passages of scripture relating to the foregoing subjects :

The first is recorded in 2 Tim. i. 13. There Paul to Timothy says, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus." Quest. What is to be done, when religion is to be planted? The answer to this we take from Mr. Case's sermon on that text. When religion is to be planted, the preachers and professors of it must boldly own the name of Christ, whatever it cost; and whatever proselytes they gain to the faith of Christ, they must use no resistance, but only overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, not loving their lives to the death, Rev. xii. 11. The only weapons they are to use are prayers and tears; and thus did the Christian religion get up in the face of the opposite world, and prevailed, without any magistracy to back it. But when religion is already planted, and received among a people, and hath gotten the advantage of law in its favour, then it ought to be defended by the magistrate, as well as other laws, made for the welfare and safety of that nation; yea, much more, because if the magistrate be the minister of God for good, as in Rom. xiii. 4. then he is to take care of the chief good, which is religion, as concerning not only the body, but also the souls of the people: and therein take example from the holy magistrates of the people of the Jews, who were zealous for God in their kind.

The second passage is recorded in Rom. xiii. 1. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God." Magistracy is an ordinance of God, as well as the ministry. The magistracy is an ordinance of Christ, as God; and the ministry is an ordinance of Christ, as mediator; and so appointed to be useful and helpful to one ano-

ther in their respective stations, as in Rev. xii. 10. it is said, "the earth helped the woman."

The third passage is recorded in Eph. i. 22, 23. "The Father gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body," &c. He was appointed to rule not only over his willing subjects, but in the midst of his enemies; Psal. cx. 2. In consequence of the above passage, Mr. Boston says, 'The management of the wheel of providence throughout the whole world, was put into the hands of Zion's King.' Into the same hands that the Father hath committed the government of the church, for there is no exception, John v. 22. "The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son" Matth. xxviii. 18. "All power both of authority and of ability in heaven and in earth, is given him," and so he is Lord of lords, and King of kings,' Rev. xvii. 14. Being vested with this headship over the world, he sets up and pulls down in the world, as he sees meet, for the good of his church. And of what use this headship over the world is, may be further learned from Isa. xliii. 14. "For your sakes, (namely for the sake of the church) I sent unto Babylon, and brought down all their nobles and the Chaldeans." Verse 15. "I am your King." Thus the King and Head of the church manageth all things by his providence, as well without as within the church, though in a very different manner; because in a very different relation as to his own people, and to strangers.

The eighth passage is recorded in Ezekiel xliii. 10, 11. "Thou son of man, shew the house to the house Israel; shew them the form of the house," &c. The Secession was stated from the corruptions, and not from the principles of the church of Scotland. If the old *formula* be rejected, and the new adopted; these that reject the old, and adopt the new, must be considered and will be called, Sectarians, as the Glaslites, the Bereans, and others. To prevent this, the Associate presbytery at its erection, expressly declared their adherence to the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the church of Scotland: To the Presbyterian form of church government, as the only form of church government, instituted by the Lord Jesus, the only head of his body the church. And here I take the liberty to recommend, the perusal of a book entitled, *Jus divinum, regiminis ecclesiastici* to all my younger brethren, in the ministry.

FINIS.

